

Drop in stormwater fees to hit projects

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Part of Lake County commissioners' plan to raise the county's piggyback sales tax rate by 0.5 percent includes reducing stormwater management fees by 50 percent for participating communities.

Revenue generated by user fees from the 14 communities that are part of the program for 2011 is \$2,043,826, according to the Lake County Stormwater Management Department. Thus, half that total is \$1,021,913.

Commissioners on Tuesday passed a resolution declaring their intent to reduce the fees effective next year.

The fee structure is certified each fall by county commissioners, so the rates for 2011 are already in place and won't have an immediate impact this year, said Stormwater Management Department Director Tim Miller.

Each year, the department tries to allocate between \$1.3 million and \$1.5 million in funding for projects, he said.

Miller said there is a period of time for project to move from a status of conceptual to design and into construction because of the nature of permitting and negotiating property easements that can take some time.

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Fees

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"Consequently, we have had this reserve of cash and it has been dedicated to projects," he said. "We are looking at a lot of that money is poised for upcoming projects that we're working on."

The department has a cash balance of \$4 million and has about \$7.5 million in projects identified by the communities, Miller said.

"We can leverage our money with the assistance of the communities for Ohio Public Works Commission funding," he said.

With half the annual revenue slated to come to the department next year, stormwater officials including the Stormwater Department Advisory Board, will take a look at what they can do to get the most value, Miller said.

"What we're going to do is we're evaluating the projects we have on the books and I'm going to be meeting with the member communities and reprioritize which ones were projected out and which ones

Lake County Stormwater Management Department user fees

Community	Service Level	2012 Actual	2013 Proposed
Concord Township	2	\$316,784	\$158,392
Fairport Harbor	1	\$25,402	\$12,701
Grand River	2	\$16,539	\$8,270
Kirtland	2	\$138,218	\$69,109
Lakeline	2	\$3,210	\$1,606
Madison Township	2	\$348,069	\$174,035
Mentor-on-the-Lake	2	\$128,442	\$64,221
Painesville	1	\$100,118	\$50,059
Painesville Township	2	\$417,741	\$208,871
Perry Village	2	\$52,623	\$26,312
Timberlake	2	\$9,429	\$4,715
Willoughby Hills	2	\$223,913	\$111,957
Willowick	2	\$251,774	\$125,887

Source: Lake County Stormwater Management Department

that we can continue to move," he said.

Willoughby Hills is a community that has taken full advantage of what the department can offer, said Councilman Kevin Malecek.

A project on Rogers Road is under way and the funds will be used to make the road drivable, Malecek said.

"We have these funds allocated for this year's budget, and it's not being affected," Malecek said.

"But the other side of the coin is if we have other projects in the future, it would possibly reduce the projects and the pot of money avail-

able."

Malecek said that the reduction in fees will also reduce the burden residents have to pay.

Madison Township Administrator Larry Advey said the program has collected about \$2.4 million in fees from township residents since inception and has returned nearly that amount in projects and services.

Township trustees have not had a chance to discuss the matter in work session, but Advey said he thinks the fee reduction is a concern for the township because it has allowed the community to

address stormwater problems it couldn't have afforded to on its own.

Miller said there several other projects in the county that should be ready to begin soon including one out for bid in Painesville Township and another in the same community for which the engineering has been completed.

"There will still be money available for projects, it just will be lessened," Miller said.

"It will be our job to try to utilize the dollars we have to bring in additional dollars and to look at our projects from a priority standpoint."

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